United Nations A/61/PV.86

General Assembly

Sixty-first session

Official Records

86th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 6 February 2007, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Ms. Al-Khalifa ..... (Bahrain)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda items 47, 113 and 149 (*continued*)

Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

United Nations reform: measures and proposals

The President: We are meeting today to resume consideration of agenda items 47, 113 and 149 in order to discuss the progress achieved in the work of the Peacebuilding Commission. Member States called for the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission during the World Summit in 2005 to focus attention on reconstruction and institution-building in order to promote sustainable development in the aftermath of conflicts.

The Peacebuilding Commission was formally established by the General Assembly, acting concurrently with the Security Council, on 20 December 2005. Resolution 60/180 also requested the Secretary-General to establish the Peacebuilding Fund.

I would like to thank the Chairman of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission, His Excellency Ismael Gaspar Martins of Angola, for his leadership. I would also like to thank the Vice-Chairpersons, Her Excellency Carmen Maria Gallardo Hernández of El Salvador and His Excellency Johan Løvald of Norway, as well as His Excellency Frank Majoor of the Netherlands, in his capacity as Chairman of the country-specific meeting on Sierra Leone, for all of their hard work.

We need to recognize that the Peacebuilding Commission has embarked on crucial tasks in Burundi and Sierra Leone. The challenge now lies primarily in the need for the international community to deliver on the pledges made to assist the peoples of those countries in their efforts to rebuild the institutional and human capacity needed for comprehensive and lasting peace.

We all have a collective responsibility to ensure that the strengthened peacebuilding architecture of the United Nations develops as envisioned by Member States. Our stock-taking of progress to date is an important step in this process.

As members are aware, the Security Council held an open debate on the Peacebuilding Commission on 31 January. I welcome this opportunity to debate the issue in the General Assembly, as this will contribute towards a better understanding of the relationship between the General Assembly and the Security Council, as well as the Economic and Social Council, in the work of the Peacebuilding Commission.

There is a strong link between poverty, weak State capacity and instability, which leads to relapses into conflict. It is therefore critical that our

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

07-23090 (E)

Organization play a leading role in helping countries to build and strengthen their institutional capacities, which promotes coexistence and the peaceful and sustainable resolution of conflicts.

National authorities play a critical role in creating the right atmosphere for sustainable peace. The United Nations role in peacebuilding should affirm national ownership, as well as the supporting role of the international community. Together with all relevant actors, the Peacebuilding Commission has an important substantive and coordinating role to play in promoting post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery, including respect for human rights and the rule of law.

The Peacebuilding Fund can play a critical role in providing countries with start-up funding for early recovery. But the Fund should not be seen as a substitute for the long-term financial assistance needed to support the transition from recovery to sustainable development. In this regard, the Commission can play an important role in coordinating and marshalling predictable financing.

To date, donors have contributed and pledged over $140 million to the Peacebuilding Fund, and many non-traditional donors have indicated their intention to contribute. I would urge all Member States to work together to reach the $250 million funding target. I will personally write to a number of potential donors to encourage them to contribute to the Peacebuilding Fund so that the funding target is met.

The Peacebuilding Commission and the Fund are still in the early stages of becoming fully operational. We should therefore take note of the lessons learned so far and, by extending our fullest cooperation and support, do our utmost to ensure that the Commission discharges its mandate successfully.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Peter Burian, President of the Security Council.

Mr. Burian (Slovakia), President of the Security Council: I wish to thank you, Madam, for having convened this plenary meeting of the General Assembly to discuss the progress achieved in the work of the Peacebuilding Commission and for having invited me to take part in the debate. The Security Council, along with the General Assembly, established the Peacebuilding Commission. We have a shared interest with the Assembly in its development and effectiveness. In that context, Security Council members agreed that it would be useful for me to participate today, in my capacity as President of the Council, to set out our common views on the key issues for the Peacebuilding Commission's future.

Post-conflict stabilization and reconstruction in countries emerging from crisis is one of the most significant challenges on the agenda of the United Nations. It was for that very reason that world leaders decided, at the United Nations Summit in September 2005, to create the Peacebuilding Commission. Their aim was to ensure an integrated approach to peacebuilding through improved United Nations capacity to coordinate among political, military, humanitarian and development actors.

The urgency of this work is, indeed, very high. As the representative of the World Bank recalled last week, at the Security Council's 5627th meeting, on post-conflict peacebuilding, more than a billion people living — or rather, existing — in extreme poverty are directly affected by civil war or are at high risk of being affected in the very near future.

That Security Council open debate on post-conflict peacebuilding, which took place last Wednesday, was held following the first two rounds of the Commission's country-specific meetings last year. The discussion was aimed at giving additional impetus to a mutually supportive partnership among all actors who are contributing to the peacebuilding process and to facilitating the constructive work of the Peacebuilding Commission. In this respect, the debate reaffirmed the need for the close and constructive interaction of all the main United Nations bodies for the achievement of our common goal of improving international cooperation in the peacebuilding area.

The debate was also an opportunity to discuss ways to strengthen the link between the Peacebuilding Commission and the Security Council. In this connection, Council members stressed the importance of focusing the Commission's work on its core mandate of providing recommendations to post-conflict States in danger of relapse into civil strife and useful recommendations and assessments about specific countries to the Security Council in such cases. The members of the Council have pledged to strengthen its role in conflict prevention and peacebuilding in line with its specific competences and mandate under the Charter.

The countries participating in the Security Council debate welcomed the initial work being undertaken by the Commission in identifying priority areas that need to be addressed in Burundi and Sierra Leone. They further welcomed the operationalization and recent staffing of the Peacebuilding Support Office and the establishment of the Peacebuilding Fund.

The discussion in the Council reaffirmed the crucial importance of national ownership in the design, implementation and sustaining of peacebuilding activities. It further underlined the significant potential of the Commission to propose integrated strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery and to develop best practices on issues that require extensive collaboration. In that regard, the Commission must play its role to the fullest. A number of Council members expressed their hope that by the time of its first anniversary in June this year, the Peacebuilding Commission will have had a measurable impact on the ground in the two African countries under consideration.

The discussion in the Security Council emphasized the critical need for a comprehensive approach to achieving stable peace and an effective settlement of armed conflicts, which would combine preventive diplomacy, crisis management and peacebuilding efforts geared to post-conflict reconstruction, ensuring continuity and consistency while moving from one stage to another.

The international community must take appropriate action to support vulnerable States and people in the transition from conflict to sustainable peace with robust stabilization and reconstruction assistance. We have great expectations of the Peacebuilding Commission's role in stabilizing countries emerging from crisis and averting a recurrence of conflict. In this context, the Security Council and the General Assembly should work hard to meet those expectations and to make the Commission a success.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Dalius Čekuolis, President of the Economic and Social Council.

Mr. Čekuolis (Lithuania), President of the Economic and Social Council: First, I wish to thank you, Madam, for convening today's meeting and inviting me to this debate on the work of the Peacebuilding Commission. This debate will certainly help to point the way forward on how best to improve the contributions of different United Nations bodies to the success of the Peacebuilding Commission, in line with their specific competencies and mandates.

The Economic and Social Council welcomes the opportunity to reiterate its commitment to working with the General Assembly and the Security Council in addressing the challenges of post-conflict peacebuilding. Indeed, it may be recalled that it was a request of the General Assembly in its resolution 55/217 for the Economic and Social Council to consider the creation of an ad hoc advisory group on African countries emerging from conflict that led to the creation of the advisory groups on Guinea-Bissau and Burundi. Those groups played a pioneering role in advancing the concept of an integrated approach to peace and development and were a catalyst for addressing the gap in the United Nations architecture for dealing with post-conflict countries.

The assignment of that pioneering work by the General Assembly to the Economic and Social Council was based on the recognition that the Council's mandate in the economic, social and environmental fields enables it to play an important role vis-à-vis countries emerging from conflict by bringing its coordinating role and responsibility to bear on peacebuilding and economic and social reconstruction. The Economic and Social Council's oversight role in matters of development cooperation and humanitarian assistance was also considered of particular value in promoting better integration between relevant policy and operational dimensions, thereby complementing ongoing work that was taking place in the General Assembly and the Security Council on advancing the concept of an integrated approach to peacebuilding. The Economic and Social Council's capacities remain valuable and relevant with the advent of the Peacebuilding Commission.

The United Nations Millennium Declaration rightly emphasized the critical role of peace and security for human well-being and for eradicating poverty in all its forms. As I noted in my statement to the Security Council last week, nine out of ten countries with the lowest human development indicators have experienced conflict at some point or other since 1990. Those countries are clearly the farthest away from achieving the targets and goals set out in the United Nations development agenda. The new roles assigned at the 2005 World Summit to the

Economic and Social Council to conduct annual ministerial reviews of progress made in the implementation of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, will strengthen its capacity to contribute in the area of peacebuilding, as they will give the Council the opportunity to continually assess how conflict is affecting the implementation of the development agenda, and to review and share lessons learned on how strategies based on the Millennium Development Goals can help forestall violent conflict.

The high-level biennial development cooperation forum can also provide a unique opportunity for the Council to examine how development cooperation can best support countries in conflict or emerging from it. The experience of the ad hoc advisory groups, including the group on Haiti, underlines the need to find appropriate mechanisms to promote good donorship in countries emerging from conflict in order to ensure that the population in those countries obtains some tangible dividends of peace. The Council could consider that issue in future development cooperation forums and make its conclusions available to the Peacebuilding Commission. The Commission can already now draw on the lessons learned from the experience of the ad hoc advisory groups in the area of resource mobilization, as well as other lessons that have been enumerated in reports of the Secretary-General on the assessment of the work of the ad hoc advisory groups.

In the spirit of sharing, the Economic and Social Council would also be interested in the results of the lessons learned that the Commission will be compiling as a way of helping the Council to consider and follow up on the Commission's recommendations. Those lessons learned could also be disseminated through the Economic and Social Council's subsidiary machinery and the networks of non-governmental organizations, in consultative status with the Council, to a wider audience.

The Council is greatly encouraged by the emerging consensus that interaction between the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council would enhance the effective functioning of the Peacebuilding Commission. The Council is ready to explore practical modalities for interaction between the Economic and Social Council and the Peacebuilding Commission, in line with General Assembly resolutions 60/180 on the establishment of the Commission and 61/16 on reform of the Economic and Social Council.

Our common objective should be to mobilize the whole institutional machinery of the United Nations to promote a wide array of policy approaches and best practices in order to develop answers to the complex and difficult needs of post-conflict countries and prevent their relapse into conflict. The meeting today will contribute to a wider consensus on the direction in which the entire system should go.

On its part, the Economic and Social Council is ready to support the work of the Peacebuilding Commission collectively and through its individual members on the Commission's Organizational Committee to develop a viable peacebuilding strategy rooted in integrated policies that promote poverty eradication, sustainable development and human rights. We believe that this approach will prove its lasting added value.

The President: I now give the floor to Mr. Ismael Abraão Gaspar Martins, Chairman of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission.

Mr. Gaspar Martins (Angola), Chairman of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission: I am particularly honoured to address the Assembly in my capacity as Chairman of the Peacebuilding Commission on agenda item 47 related to United Nations reform and the progress achieved in the work of the Peacebuilding Commission.

The holding of this meeting by the General Assembly is of great political importance and symbolism. Indeed, the decision on the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission was taken by the heads of State at their 2005 Summit in this very conference Hall. That is also the case for the subsequent adoption of the founding resolution on 20 December of the same year. The General Assembly was also the framework in which the difficult but rich negotiations on United Nations reform that led to the establishment of that body took place.

This preliminary debate, which precedes the submission in June of the report of the Peacebuilding Commission to the General Assembly, is an expression of the reiterated interest of the general membership of our Organization in the state of affairs in the Peacebuilding Commission since its launching.

The interest of the general membership in the work of the Peacebuilding Commission, as demonstrated by the magnitude and quality of participation in the open debate held by the Security Council last week, also represents a mark of the political will aimed at finding ways of moving faster in order to meet the high expectations on the ground, particularly in countries emerging from conflict.

The decision to establish the Peacebuilding Commission brought a new ray of hope to millions of people trapped in post-conflict situations. However, bright ideas will not be enough if they are not followed by concrete actions. I therefore hope that our debates both in the Security Council and today here in the General Assembly can serve as a catalyst for the achievement of concrete results on the ground, the acceleration of the clarification of outstanding procedural issues in the Commission, and most importantly, the achievement of the Commission's main purpose, as defined in the 2005 Outcome Document, of bringing together all relevant actors to marshal resources and to advise on and propose integrated strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery.

In that connection, the General Assembly can play a very important role by rallying its entire membership towards achieving the shared aim of realizing the possible outcome of a common strategy, capable of mobilizing the resources needed for post-conflict reconstruction in the countries on the Commission's agenda.

I am confident that you, Madam, in your personal capacity as President of the General Assembly, have the moral and political authority to appeal to the international community for a positive response to meeting the pressing demand for contributions to the Peacebuilding Fund. Indeed, a more satisfactory response to the Fund by the international community could determine the difference between success and failure in peacebuilding. In that connection, I welcome the initiative you announced just this morning to write to donors, encouraging them to contribute to the Peacebuilding Fund.

While speaking before the Security Council last week, I stated that the Peacebuilding Commission is a body to which the Member States dedicated much valuable time to establishing. I also stressed that that body will perform only in accordance with the means which the international community puts at its disposal in order to meet the high expectations of the populations of countries emerging from conflict.

Moreover, I described peacebuilding as complex by nature and a long-term process requiring an equally persistent and long-term commitment by all. It is consequently an ambitious project that needs adequate means. Meanwhile, it has been generally observed that the Peacebuilding Commission experienced a very modest start if we take into account, among other factors, the then-agreed requirement that a small Peacebuilding Support Office be established within existing resources, while many Member States equally believed that it was important to give the Office and the Commission the ability to function from the very beginning.

As we proceed, we measure the magnitude of the tasks before the Peacebuilding Commission and the need for suitable means. I am convinced that, taking its responsibilities into account, the General Assembly will play an important role in the assessment of the ambitious tasks required of that new body at the appropriate time, including on the occasion of the discussion of its first report, to be submitted in June.

We are at a turning point in laying the foundation for this project. After holding two country-specific meetings and a briefing on the countries under consideration in the Peacebuilding Commission, as well as launching a working group on post-conflict lessons learned and the ongoing staffing of the Peacebuilding Support Office, the Peacebuilding Commission has paved the way for the next decisive step and for the formation of strategies that take fully into account the interests of the peoples and Governments of Burundi and Sierra Leone. I believe that the fundamental principle of national ownership is being safeguarded.

Though the initial organizational weaknesses are yet to be fully addressed, the required steps are being taken to ensure the regular functioning, particularly of the Organizational Committee, making sure that it acts as a focal point for discussion of and guidance to the activities of the Peacebuilding Commission by holding its formal and informal meetings regularly.

The elaboration of a country-specific plan of action and of a programme of action of the Organizational Committee will allow the Commission to serve better the interests of the countries under

consideration, including through field visits already programmed, while efforts are under way to provide needed and timely information on a regular basis to the Member States and the international community as a whole on the activities of the Commission.

As has been frequently noted, rebuilding societies after conflict is much more complex and difficult than putting an end to fighting. Solutions cannot be imported. Peace has to be built by the people affected, but they cannot do it alone. The international community can and must play a role and help in the consolidation of peace in order to overcome the legacies of war. If that does not happen, local conflicts will resume, threatening to destabilize larger regions and undermining development and hope for a brighter future. We have just started the process of reversing that trend and succeeding in Burundi and Sierra Leone. It is only when we do so that we will be able to give hope to those living in post-conflict situations, expecting an equal contribution from the Peacebuilding Commission and thus fostering its credibility.

The Peacebuilding Commission can fully benefit from its innovative nature and composition, as well as from the experience accumulated by the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and other bodies. Success or failure will depend on the commitment that I am sure this debate in the General Assembly will help to galvanize.

Mr. Wolfe (Jamaica): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement on the related agenda items regarding the activities of the Peacebuilding Commission.

The General Assembly, as we well know, is the main deliberative organ of the United Nations, and the Non-Aligned Movement welcomes the opportunity to participate in this open debate, not only acknowledging the role of this body in relation to discussions on any questions or matters within the scope of the United Nations Charter, but also paying due regard to the important function of the General Assembly in relation to the activities of the Peacebuilding Commission.

It is within that context that the Non-Aligned Movement welcomes the opportunity to participate, while emphasizing that the open debates in the Security Council last Wednesday and again today in the General Assembly only provide the basis for some preliminary exchanges which may inform but not substitute for the annual report to be presented by the Commission to the General Assembly and the subsequent review, as mandated by resolution 60/180.

Like any fledgling body, the Peacebuilding Commission is still grappling with the development of its own rules of procedure and working methods, notwithstanding its successes to date. The Non-Aligned Movement would like to see a more proactive Peacebuilding Commission. The rules of procedure need to be strengthened and should include the requirements for regular meetings of the Organizational Committee in a manner that would allow the Committee to act as a planning, review and evaluation mechanism in between country-specific meetings. There should also be a clear timetable to better prepare for country-specific meetings.

As an important element of its working methods, the Organizational Committee should, among other things, make a clear determination as to the degree and level of progress made to date as well as chart the way forward after each country-specific meeting. That assessment and evaluation should be based on the Chair's summary of discussions held in country-specific meetings, in addition to inputs from the countries under consideration. And dare I add that, judging from the joint meetings that were held yesterday, I think we are making progress in the right direction.

The Movement supports the view that the decisions and recommendations of the Organizational Committee must be based on a holistic, coherent and inclusive approach and must also reflect a careful balance in addressing situations in countries under review. Balance can be achieved only through an integrated approach based on active engagement with the principal organs of the United Nations, including the Economic and Social Council. Such balance and inclusiveness should also extend to contributions from both donor and non-donor countries. It should be emphasized that decisions regarding the operations of the Peacebuilding Commission should necessarily be taken within the Organizational Committee, which, as the Chairman himself has pointed out, is the focal point for all discussions and guidance in relation to the Commission's activities.

The Non-Aligned Movement remains firm in its position that the provision of financial resources should be guided by national priorities and based on the collective decision of the members of the

Peacebuilding Commission. Recommendations for assistance must be based on the priority areas established by the Government of the country under consideration, as well as other national authorities and actors. The issue of national ownership is critical, as it lends legitimacy to the consolidation process and provides continuity and sustainability to peacebuilding efforts long after international involvement ends. National ownership should mean exactly that — national ownership.

The effective and timely disbursement of resources for peacebuilding is fundamental to the process of recovery — a fact driven home by the representatives of both Burundi and Sierra Leone in their recent presentations before the Security Council. The Non-Aligned Movement clearly understands — and it should be understood — that actual disbursement can fall short of pledges and promises, but, if the Peacebuilding Commission is to be taken seriously, then its approval for disbursement of financial and other support must be accompanied by swift action. We must never lose sight of the sense of urgency which must underpin its work.

To assist in the process of determining the size of country envelopes, the Non-Aligned Movement advocates a much closer working relationship between the Peacebuilding Support Office and the Organizational Committee. Such a consultative approach will provide greater transparency and inclusiveness in the decision-making process.

The Non-Aligned Movement strongly shares the view of the Chairman of the Peacebuilding Commission that the work of the Commission will be incomplete and fall short if its meetings in New York become the sole medium through which the situation in countries under consideration are evaluated. To advance its peacebuilding strategy, the Commission should seek to gain a clearer appreciation and understanding of local dynamics in relation to peacebuilding efforts on the ground. In that regard, there is therefore a need for early field missions by the Peacebuilding Commission to Burundi and to Sierra Leone to, among other things, evaluate the situation on the ground and exchange information with Government authorities, civil society and other key stakeholders. Field missions should, in essence, be an integral tool of the Commission. Again, coming out of the joint meeting we held yesterday, it is encouraging to note that such field missions will soon become reality.

The Non-Aligned Movement would like to use this opportunity to reiterate its appreciation to the Chairman of the Peacebuilding Commission, the Chairpersons of the country-specific meetings and the Peacebuilding Support Office, as well as our own Vice-President, for their efforts to date in carrying forward the work of the Commission.

I would also like to reaffirm the Movement's commitment to working towards the success and full implementation of the Commission's mandate, which, by extension, will determine the success achieved on the ground for countries in need.

Finally, the international community must remain committed and vigilant with respect to the overall effort aimed at consolidating the gains and achievements made, while mitigating the possibility of the countries under review relapsing into conflict and civil strife.

Mr. Matussek (Germany): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The candidate countries Turkey, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, align themselves with this declaration.

The European Union would like to thank you, Madam President, for having organized this debate, and we would also like to thank the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement that initiated the request for this debate. Today's meeting follows on the heels of last week's open debate in the Security Council and is an opportunity to continue a dialogue between the Peacebuilding Commission and its partners in the United Nations system on ways to increase their cooperation. We are confident that the Peacebuilding Commission, as well as the General Assembly and the Security Council, will benefit from this dialogue. What is even more important, though, is that the countries on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission will benefit from such debates, as they will lead to more effective coordination and to the implementation of peacebuilding strategies.

The European Union sees the establishment of the Commission as a key achievement of the United Nations reform process. Together with the Peacebuilding Support Office and the Peacebuilding Fund, it forms the core of the new United Nations

peacebuilding architecture. As a flexible instrument, the Peacebuilding Commission is learning by doing. In our view, members should be willing to work creatively within the framework given.

Since its inception, the European Union has supported the concept of the Commission: a body that will ensure an integrated approach to peacebuilding, taking into account the links between security, development, human rights and the rule of law. That corresponds very closely to the European Union's comprehensive approach to conflict prevention, development and peacebuilding. Over the years, the European Union has developed and used an array of instruments. They include political and development-related tools as well as conflict-prevention and crisis-management mechanisms.

The European Union, the member States of the European Union and the European Community engage in peacebuilding activities worldwide — in Africa and in Asia, as well as in the Middle East, Europe, Central Asia and Latin America. European member States and the European Community fund and implement projects in all areas of peacebuilding. A few important areas are demobilization and reintegration, security sector reform, good governance, reconciliation efforts, children- and gender-related post-conflict assistance, trade-related measures and reconstruction operations. The European Union is committed to actively supporting the work of the Peacebuilding Commission on the basis of its experience, resources and worldwide operability.

The Peacebuilding Commission has got off to a good start. After only two sets of country-specific meetings, it has identified areas of priority action for the two countries under consideration. The Commission has also established a dialogue among the Governments concerned, the United Nations system, institutional donors, regional actors and members of the Peacebuilding Commission. Now the recommendations of the Commission must be implemented in the countries concerned and within the institutional framework of the United Nations. Here, the Commission also needs the support of the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. Dialogue must also be broadened in the countries concerned to include national civil society, the private sector and other relevant parties.

One year after its establishment, the Commission will also have to make decisions as to its strategic goals. If the Commission is to add value to peacebuilding efforts worldwide, and particularly in the countries themselves, it will have to be ambitious. It will have to consist of more than the tools we already have — more than a mere coordination mechanism and more than a donors' conference. Promoting the development of a viable peacebuilding strategy which has broad ownership is where the Peacebuilding Commission can really add value.

The European Union would like to contribute to the discussion among Peacebuilding Commission members on structuring the future work of the Commission and its interaction with other actors. In so doing, we will draw on our own experience in coordinating EU programmes, as well as on the experience in the first country-specific meetings.

The Commission has defined general areas of priority for each country under consideration. It will now be useful to further prioritize within those areas, in consultation with the countries concerned, United Nations country teams, donors, civil society and the private sector. Defining priorities necessarily means making a selection among a huge number of possible areas of engagement. The Peacebuilding Commission should focus on the following areas: those that have a direct and traceable link to the causes of conflict, those in which instruments of classical development are not available or functional and those in where coordination and integration are especially needed. All peacebuilding initiatives in the field should be linked to existing strategies and programmes so as to avoid duplication of efforts.

We want the Commission to be able to work coherently, continuously and in a results-oriented way. To achieve that, the Commission should focus on activities in the field. It should enhance cooperation with all relevant actors, including donors and non-State actors. It should make use of regular informal meetings in between formal meetings and find a way to capture and condense lessons learned from its work.

There are many ways to enhance cooperation among the Peacebuilding Commission, the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. Regular meetings between the Peacebuilding Commission Chairs and the Presidents of those bodies would be one possibility. Inviting those

Chairs and the Chairs of country-specific meetings to brief those bodies would be another.

The European Union remains committed to working on integrated peacebuilding strategies with the Peacebuilding Commission and with the countries concerned. We are determined to make this key project of United Nations reform a success and to ensure that its impact is felt positively in the regions where it is engaged.

The President: I call now on the representative of the Netherlands, who will speak in his capacity as Chairman of the country-specific meetings on Sierra Leone.

Mr. Majoor (Netherlands), Chairman of the country-specific meetings on Sierra Leone: Allow me to thank you, Madam President, for the opportunity to join the Assembly in this important debate on the work of the Peacebuilding Commission. The debate is timely, for the work of the Commission is now at an important stage in which the contribution of all actors and interested parties is needed. The interest shown by the General Assembly in the work of the Peacebuilding Commission is therefore very welcome.

In my capacity as Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission's country-specific meetings on Sierra Leone, I should like to inform the Assembly about progress made in recent months, as well as about activities that will be taking place in the coming weeks.

In response to requests from the Government of Sierra Leone and from the Security Council, in June last year the Organizational Committee selected Sierra Leone to be one of the first countries to be considered by the Peacebuilding Commission. Since then, focused discussions have taken place in two sessions of the Peacebuilding Commission, gathering in its country-specific format for Sierra Leone. I should like to summarize some of the key outcomes of those discussions in the following seven points.

First, in Sierra Leone, important achievements have been made to date in restoring peace and stability and promoting post-conflict recovery. This was highlighted during both country-specific meetings.

Secondly, the Commission welcomed the efforts of the international community in supporting the Government in developing and implementing the various strategies — the poverty reduction strategy, the medium-term expenditure framework and the peace consolidation strategy.

Thirdly, members stressed that all peacebuilding efforts should be linked to the existing strategies under the leadership and ownership of the Government of Sierra Leone. In this context, the Government of Sierra Leone and the United Nations have established a National Steering Committee on Peacebuilding to relate to the work of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund. It will bring together Government, United Nations, donor and civil society representatives to jointly address peacebuilding priorities.

Fourthly, members and the Government of Sierra Leone agreed that specific challenges need to be addressed in four critical areas: social and youth empowerment and employment; the consolidation of democracy and good governance; justice and security sector reform; and capacity-building.

Fifthly, Sierra Leone was declared eligible to benefit from the Peacebuilding Fund. It is expected that a country envelope in excess of the initially indicated $25 million will be made available once the review process stipulated in the terms of reference for the Fund is completed.

Sixthly, members urged the international community to ensure an adequate level of external assistance and to lend support to the Government of Sierra Leone to broaden its donor base and secure assistance, including further debt relief.

Lastly, the Commission also called on the international community to provide, in a timely manner, adequate resources and support for the upcoming presidential and parliamentary elections, including capacity-building to ensure women's equal participation in the political process. In this, a great deal of progress has been observed. The initial resource gap of $7 million for the elections has been reduced to less than $3 million, with further pledges expected. Here, progress has been made in various respects: an independent National Electoral Commission has been established to prepare credible elections, an electoral code of conduct has been signed by eight political parties, the Sierra Leone police force has been strengthened and a media code of conduct for electoral reporting is being discussed country-wide.

I believe that these early developments show that the Peacebuilding Commission is making a contribution to elevating post-conflict countries to firmer ground in their search for the building of durable peace. It is in-country — in Sierra Leone itself — that its contribution should become apparent, and the first signals that that is happening are encouraging. I am particularly encouraged by the way in which all stakeholders — chief among them the Government of Sierra Leone — are investing in our discussions and joint efforts under the umbrella of the Peacebuilding Commission.

We must now maintain this momentum in our discussions in New York. In my capacity as Chairman of the country-specific meetings on Sierra Leone, I have — together with the Norwegian representative, as Chairman of the country-specific meetings on Burundi — laid down a work plan for our activities in the coming months. It will guide our work ahead of the next country-specific meeting on Sierra Leone, which is due to take place in March or April. It sets a timeline and provides for a division of responsibilities for actions to be undertaken by the Sierra Leone Government, the United Nations system and other stakeholders.

A key focus of the work of the Peacebuilding Commission on Sierra Leone in the coming months will be the development of an integrated approach aimed at clearly outlining the commitments made by the Government of Sierra Leone and the international community.

There can be no denying the actual and potential contribution that the Peacebuilding Commission can make to the promotion of peace and stability in Sierra Leone. With the continued involvement of all stakeholders — the Government of Sierra Leone, the Commission's full membership, the various United Nations bodies on the ground, non-governmental organizations, civil society and the private sector — and with continued engagement by the General Assembly, the Security Council and other United Nations bodies, we will be able to make a difference. The Peacebuilding Commission's discussions thus far have been guided by a spirit of openness and commitment. It is that spirit that will remain essential as we continue our discussions in New York.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Norway, Chairman of the country-specific meetings on Burundi.

Mr. Løvald (Norway), Chairman of the country-specific meetings on Burundi: An unacceptable number of peace agreements disintegrate, and countries are lapsing back into conflict. The need to do better is obvious. To succeed — which we must — we must maintain and, if possible, further increase the momentum behind our peacebuilding efforts. While our focus at all times must be on concrete results at the country level, we are all also aware of the importance of this endeavour for the United Nations and the international community as a whole. The Peacebuilding Commission, together with the Peacebuilding Support Office and the Peacebuilding Fund, has the potential to be a powerful tool for meeting challenges in a more coordinated and comprehensive manner.

Madam President, as your predecessor, Jan Eliasson, said at the inaugural meeting of the Peacebuilding Commission on 23 June last year, it is in the country-specific settings that the work of the Peacebuilding Commission will ultimately be judged. With that in mind, the Commission quickly started its work with Burundi and Sierra Leone last autumn. I am humbled and honoured to be a Vice-Chair of the Commission at this initial stage and to lead its work on Burundi. My observations here will concentrate on Burundi.

At the outset, the Government of Burundi was asked to give the Commission guidance on critical peacebuilding challenges facing the country. The Commission agreed with the Government of Burundi that these were good governance, the rule of law, security sector reform and community recovery. On the basis of those critical challenges, a number of important peacebuilding priorities were identified: inter alia, strengthening national dialogue, continued efforts to include women in peace consolidation, sustained political support from countries in the region and strengthening the Government's ability to deliver on basic services, inter alia, through budgetary support.

The Peacebuilding Commission's engagement with Burundi is now entering a new phase. A work plan for the Commission's efforts in support of Burundi is being presented to its members this week. A key focus of the work plan is to develop an integrated approach to peacebuilding, clearly outlining Burundi's

commitments and a response to be provided by the international community in critical areas.

The elaboration of an integrated approach to peacebuilding will be an important tool in our future work. The purpose of such an approach is threefold: it must demonstrate where additional efforts are important in order to achieve effective peacebuilding; it must indicate who should do what in order to fulfil those tasks, in terms of both the Government's commitments and the efforts to be undertaken by other stakeholders, be they the United Nations, the international financial institutions, institutional donors, regional actors, bilateral donors or civil society; and it must present benchmarks and allow for the review of commitments and pledges.

The Government of Burundi has ownership over this process and is well equipped to exercise that ownership, not least through the establishment of a joint peacebuilding mechanism bringing together the Government, the United Nations and civil society and bilateral actors. We intend to work closely with that body on the work plan and on the integrated approach to peacebuilding.

Our support for peacebuilding in Burundi is a commitment that will last a number of years. By definition, it will involve a special partnership between Burundi and the international community.

Speaking in my national capacity, I can say that Norway, for its part, will contribute its share. We will work with the Peacebuilding Commission on Burundi as long as necessary. We have already made our contribution to the Peacebuilding Fund and will consider additional allocations in the future. In that connection, I compliment you, Madam President, on your initiative to write to a number of potential donors to encourage them to contribute to the Peacebuilding Fund so that the funding target is met.

The Norwegian Minister of International Development paid a visit to Burundi last year to discuss increased bilateral cooperation in support of peacebuilding and development. For that reason, we emphasize the importance of the donors' round table set for March this year in Bujumbura, in which Norway and other donors will participate. In order to increase our bilateral contact, Norway will establish representation in Bujumbura in the near future. We are pleased that the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Burundi will be paying a visit to Norway later this week.

We are very aware of the challenging task that the Peacebuilding Commission has taken on, both in Burundi and in Sierra Leone. It is important that all stakeholders, together with the Governments concerned, succeed in this undertaking. By so doing, the work of the Peacebuilding Commission will also be an example for other countries and peoples showing that earlier cycles of conflict and renewed violence can be broken. In those endeavours, the full support of the General Assembly will be much needed. The discussions today and in the Security Council last week are testimony of the importance Member States place on the peacebuilding agenda.

The annual report to be submitted by the Peacebuilding Commission to the sixty-second session of the General Assembly will provide another opportunity to take stock of where we are and where additional efforts are necessary. That is a task to which all of us can, and must, contribute.

Mrs. Gallardo Hernández (El Salvador), Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission's working group on lessons learned (*spoke in Spanish*). We welcome your initiative, Madam President, to convene this debate with the participation of Member States.

Throughout its history, the United Nations has accumulated a number of experiences and lessons learned in assisting countries in transition from a culture of violence to one of peace. Following the end of conflict, such countries aspire to a new way of life that includes security, sustainable development and the rule of law. That is a new challenge for the Organization.

El Salvador, in its capacity as Vice-Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, has been given the mandate to serve as the coordinator of the group on lessons learned and best practices. That mandate was a response to the spirit of the resolutions of both the Security Council and General Assembly. In their twelfth preambular paragraphs, both Council resolution 1645 (2005) and Assembly resolution 60/180 state that "countries that have experienced recent post-conflict recovery would make valuable contributions to the work of the Peacebuilding Commission". The resolutions also set out the primary functions of the Peacebuilding Commission, among which we emphasize the need to develop integrated strategies

regarding peacebuilding processes so as to systematize successful experiences.

Countries that have in recent years made the transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding have demonstrated the political will and capacity to unite various national forces in a new national effort for peace and development. However, those countries also tend to face a number of challenges simultaneously, including pressing demands from civil society and a lack of financial resources, which impede the implementation of projects and initiatives aimed at transforming a paper peace to a living peace.

Coherent efforts among various national actors have benefited from varied support initiatives by the United Nations. It is time that Member States became aware of all that, and that it be shared in an appropriate context, so as to promote future joint strategies and coordination on the ground with all agencies of the system and the mechanisms set up in the framework of the Economic and Social Council. Our work in coordinating the group on lessons learned entails bolstering institutional memory and compiling a set of lessons learned in order to strengthen future United Nations efforts in post-conflict processes.

It is true that each conflict has its own specificities, and the international community should respect the national character in carrying out post-conflict processes. Nevertheless, similarities emerge repeatedly. That points to the fact that such aspects as new forms of relationships between former adversaries, the reintegration of former combatants, the strengthening of institutions, judicial reform, public security, youth employment and the participation of women, among other factors, are prerequisites to laying the foundations of a new national endeavour. If those elements are not addressed, they can lead to an unexpected resurgence of violence.

We welcome the decision taken by the members of the Commission to establish the group on lessons learned. Above all, our work should be a source of inspiration and enrichment for the assistance provided to countries currently under consideration, namely, Burundi and Sierra Leone.

Allow me underscore the fact that this is not about duplicating efforts or generating additional budgetary implications. To the contrary: our contribution and open dialogue should be oriented towards priorities already identified by Burundi and Sierra Leone. To that end, we should rely on the participation of key protagonists in processes that can be considered successful. We should listen to civil society, private sector and political representatives, as well as to representatives of the United Nations system who played a key role in the post-conflict phase of a given country.

I should add that we also expect the Peacebuilding Commission to be able to incorporate into its collective memory instances in which populations, with the assistance of the United Nations, were able to move ahead, succeeded in agreeing on national priorities in order to live together in peace and decided to resolve their differences through dialogue. We believe that this is about active memory — which is to say, to remember in order to avert or rectify, or to repeat if the result of an action was positive. We also understand that our participation in the Peacebuilding Commission should chart a course that we can follow to develop and strengthen this new organ of the United Nations.

In conclusion, in my national capacity, allow me to emphasize some elements that seem especially important to us.

On 16 January, El Salvador will commemorate the fifteenth anniversary of the signing of the Peace Accords. In 1992 the various parties to the armed conflict decided to sign the agreement in Chapultepec, Mexico. The United Nations assisted us throughout the negotiations, as well as during the verification and implementation of the Accords. To the satisfaction of Salvadorans, the Organization provided us with a sense of closure. At that time, the friends of the Secretary-General provided us with the necessary atmosphere and encouragement to continue to negotiate. Our participation in the Peacebuilding Commission today is, in a sense, a way to give back what we received when we most needed it.

The peacebuilding processes in Burundi and Sierra Leone have particular resonance for, and are of special interest to, my country, given that we experienced similar situations and faced similar uncertainty vis-à-vis resources. We understand that lasting peace can be maintained only if there is national will and ongoing effort by all. We also understand that, today more than ever, young people should find their own way in life and have new opportunities for employment and recreation.

Otherwise they themselves risk becoming a threat to domestic peace.

On the basis of lessons learned, our commitment as a country is to be part of the response to the new challenges to sustainable peace in the globalized world and to foster the hope that has been reborn in post-conflict societies because of the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission, of which my country is honoured to be part.

Mr. Schiltz (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): I wish at the outset to welcome the holding of today's General Assembly debate. Luxembourg fully associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Germany on behalf of the European Union.

When the fighting is over, the real struggle begins. It was to address that seemingly contradictory reality that, at the September 2005 World Summit, heads of State or Government called for the establishment of a Peacebuilding Commission. When the guns fall silent following an armed conflict and the hatchet is buried, a long-term battle begins against the fragility of the newfound peace. It is a battle to strengthen the physical safety of individuals and reconcile former enemies; to rehabilitate the institutions of the failing State, particularly the judicial system; and to rebuild infrastructures, provide basic social services and create an environment for new or renewed economic activity. This battle must be fought every day to assert the primacy of the rule of law over the barbarism of war. It must be fought to prevent the resurgence of violence, which is unworthy of human beings, because it deprives them of their most precious possession: life and the lives of their loved ones.

To win this battle, we must fight it together. The magnitude of the damage, the challenges and the problems is too enormous for us to have the capacity — or even the will — to tackle them alone or piecemeal. If the hope for a better life is to be reborn out of the ashes and rubble of conflict, we must stand together, reflect together about the way forward, agree on priorities, join forces and pool sufficient resources to attain the objectives we have set.

Given this challenge, together with the chance to make a fresh start, we would do well to recall the truth solemnly affirmed in the World Summit Outcome Document (resolution 60/1): there can be no security without development and no development without security, and there can be neither without respect for human rights. That is particularly true in post-conflict situations; indeed, it is the mandate of the Peacebuilding Commission.

Hindsight permits me to observe that the international community has not allowed itself to be discouraged by the scope of this task. Rather, it seized the opportunity to establish the Commission, which will remain one of the all-too-rare outcomes of the Summit. Since its creation — provided for by two parallel General Assembly and Security Council resolutions — the Peacebuilding Commission has been equipped with its operational instruments: the Organizational Committee; the first country-specific meetings, on Burundi and Sierra Leone; and, extremely important, the Peacebuilding Fund.

My country, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, is proud to be able to participate in the work of the Commission. Both at the bilateral level and as a State member of the European Union, Luxembourg places the problems of managing conflict and post-conflict situations at the centre of its foreign policy, since we make broad use of multilateral instruments, chief among which is, of course, the United Nations.

In a broad and multidimensional approach to peacebuilding, important factors such as the processes of national reconciliation, resolving political, ethnic and religious conflicts, restoring effective and democratic public institutions, reforming the security sector, overhauling the judicial, police and penal systems and combating impunity — to name just a few — must be accorded their appropriate place, depending on the requirements of each situation.

Long active in the areas of development cooperation and humanitarian action, Luxembourg — which can announce that its official development assistance for 2007 will constitute 0.9 per cent of its gross national income — shares the concern of those who do not want to see the fruits of cooperation with partners from the developing world called into question by internal or subregional conflicts.

Every recourse to weapons is clearly a setback for development, dealing a harsh blow to populations, particularly the poorest and most vulnerable groups: women and children. I shall cite two examples. The situation in Côte d'Ivoire continues to cast a pall over the fragile economies of its neighbouring countries, a number of which are Luxembourg's cooperation partners.

Likewise, the recent armed incidents that have set the members of the Touareg minority in northern Mali against the Malian armed forces have considerably impeded the development of a region already greatly disadvantaged as a result of its landlocked status and climatic conditions. I would not venture to judge the motivations of either side; I would merely note that neither in the 1990s nor in 2006 did violence help to meet the people's most basic needs. On the other hand, the men and women of Kidal and the local authorities, as well as the Government of Mali, have found Luxembourg to be a reliable partner that truly understands the concept of the peace dividend. Thus, encouraged by the Algiers agreements, we have decided to considerably strengthen the financial package for the Kidal region and have implemented programmes to improve basic social services, to strengthen vocational training and integration and to support decentralization and shared peace governance.

It is that kind of experience, among other things, that Luxembourg intends to contribute to the work of the Peacebuilding Commission during our mandate. In that context, we have every confidence in the team put in place, under the guidance of Assistant Secretary-General Carolyn McAskie, whom we encourage to directly confront the organizational problems that never fail to appear whenever a new structure is set up. Guided by a concern for efficiency, flexibility and transparency, the Peacebuilding Support Office, which we envisaged as small in the General Assembly resolution, will be large in terms of its effectiveness and will provide valuable administrative and substantive services to the Commission's rotating members, in keeping with its mandate.

While we thank the United Nations Development Programme for having undertaken the actual management of the Peacebuilding Fund, it will be up to the Support Office to identify the funds available and the actors most directly concerned with a country-specific situation and then to gather information and unlock potential synergies, which are essential in formulating integrated intervention strategies.

In the area of development cooperation, on the basis of multiyear programmes with a limited number of partner countries, Luxembourg has for years been taking advantage of the experience and know-how of multilateral actors, particularly United Nations funds and programmes. We are actively involved in the governing boards of such funds and programmes, and the richness of the debates held there and the network of contacts established are definite assets in the integrated approach that we want our development effort to have. In that spirit, we hope that the exercise of "delivering as one United Nations" in developing countries will also be of benefit to the work of the Peacebuilding Support Office.

Finally, the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission responds — unfortunately, we must admit — to a need that has been and continues to be deeply felt, since the resurgence of violence following a peace agreement must not be tolerated by the international community.

In more general terms, I would add that the need for more coherence and coordination in our efforts has never been as clearly set out as it has been in recent years. I would, for example, refer in particular to the adoption in March 2005 of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. The timetable for its implementation will no doubt set the agenda in years to come.

Moreover, since the adoption of the Monterrey Consensus, there has been real awareness about the growing need for financing for development cooperation efforts, as well as for humanitarian efforts in the areas of rehabilitation and reconstruction. That awareness has been translated into genuine commitment on the part of the European Union. In May 2005, under the presidency of Luxembourg — to which I refer without false modesty — the 25 member States of the European Union committed themselves by 2015 to devote 0.7 per cent of their gross national income to development cooperation. Those decisions, along with the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission, signal a promising future approach. It is up to us to carry it out. It is up to us to invest energetically and with commitment in the work of the Peacebuilding Commission.

Ms. Graham (New Zealand): It is my privilege to speak on behalf of the Governments of Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

Canada, Australia and New Zealand strongly support the Peacebuilding Commission and believe that it has a critical role to play in coordinating and integrating post-conflict peacebuilding activities. A strong Commission will move the international community past an ad hoc response to peacebuilding and on to a more coherent footing regarding what

needs to occur in a post-conflict setting to achieve lasting peace.

In the year since the creation of the Peacebuilding Commission, in December 2005, good progress has been made in establishing that new institution, including determining representation on the Commission's Organizational Committee and in starting a dialogue to clarify the Commission's specific functions within the United Nations system. We were also pleased to see Burundi and Sierra Leone referred to the Commission by the Security Council in June 2006.

Despite that progress, Canada, Australia and New Zealand have been disappointed by the overemphasis placed on procedural matters by some members of the Commission, at the expense of substantive peacebuilding issues — the core mandate of the Commission. Canada, Australia and New Zealand urge the Commission to find new ways of working that befit the challenges before it, including working informally when possible in order to maximize progress during this formative phase, refocusing on its core mandate of advising United Nations organs on integrated strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding, giving attention and resources to reconstruction and institution-building efforts and serving as a focused forum for political discussions related to war-to-peace transitions.

That mandate needs to be approached in an action-oriented and flexible manner, and should include the identification of results that can be realistically achieved. Canada, Australia and New Zealand also urge the Commission to develop modalities to ensure the active participation of civil society and other Governments in all areas of the Commission's work, as their input and participation are critical to the success of the peacebuilding process.

While we recognize that building peace is a long-term process, Canada, Australia and New Zealand continue to believe that the Peacebuilding Commission should focus on those cases where it can have the greatest and most transformative impact, and which can be viewed as immediate positive contributions to kick-start a longer-term peace process. Our Governments were very pleased to see the Peacebuilding Support Office undertake missions to Burundi and Sierra Leone to identify gaps in the peacebuilding process and areas where the Commission could have the highest impact. We were also pleased that the Governments of Burundi and Sierra Leone were subsequently able to identify key priorities for the Commission during its autumn sessions. Now that those two countries have been declared eligible to benefit from the Peacebuilding Fund, we are hopeful that there will be early disbursements — and early results from the investments made.

As Burundi and Sierra Leone make the transition from fragile post-conflict States towards lasting peace, international support remains critical for the consolidation of the gains made so far. Sustainable recovery and peace cannot be achieved without addressing a country's needs in the political, social and economic spheres, or without addressing the interlinkages among them. The Governments of Canada, Australia and New Zealand were therefore pleased to see that the December sessions of the Peacebuilding Commission identified several cross-cutting themes, including support for political dialogue for Burundi and the strengthening of democratic governance and gender mainstreaming for Sierra Leone. Canada, Australia and New Zealand view that as very important work to ensure that whatever activities are undertaken by the Commission do not duplicate efforts already under way, and that they meaningfully advance international coordination to ensure a positive contribution to the peacebuilding process.

While better coordination of the donor community and the international financial institutions is a key objective for the Peacebuilding Commission, Canada, Australia and New Zealand view the Commission's work as constituting more than just a venue to pledge assistance. We are hopeful that the work that the Commission is doing in relation to the national peacebuilding strategies of Sierra Leone and Burundi will begin to build the basis of expertise for the integrated identification and addressing of thematic areas that require attention in all post-conflict peacebuilding situations.

As Assistant Secretary-General McAskie has pointed out, that task will require a new investment of intellectual capital aimed at developing a strategic peacebuilding framework. Needless to say, the Peacebuilding Commission is unlikely to achieve its full potential until we are able to articulate that basic vision of the body's objectives and output. That will require that issues pertaining to security sector and justice sector reform, disarmament, demobilization and

reintegration, gender equality, children and armed conflict and refugees and internally displaced persons all be taken up on a thematic basis, both within the Organizational Committee and in country-specific meetings.

In that regard, we were particularly encouraged when, at the first country-specific meetings on Burundi and Sierra Leone, the Commission reaffirmed the centrality of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), on women, peace and security, for the implementation of peacebuilding strategies. That work needs to be expanded to other areas of cross-cutting significance as the Commission seeks to design a strategic framework against which the Commission can frame its advice and its interventions.

The Peacebuilding Commission is a vital component of the wider United Nations reform agenda. The transition from war to peace requires comprehensive concerted efforts to prevent a relapse to violence. We look forward to working with the Commission in the coming months and years as it seeks to clarify its role and to make a positive contribution to the very important task of building durable peace in countries emerging from conflict.

Mr. Abdelaziz (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me at the outset to convey to you, Madam President, my delegation's appreciation for responding positively to the request of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) that a debate be held on post-conflict peacebuilding following the open debate held in the Security Council.

The delegation of Egypt associates itself fully with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Jamaica on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and expresses its appreciation for the briefings given by the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, by the Vice-Chairs of the Commission in their respective capacities as Chair of the country-specific meetings on Burundi and Chair of the Commission's Working Group on Lessons Learned, and by the Chair of the country-specific meetings on Sierra Leone.

Experience shows that peacebuilding, in a broad sense, must be considered from a multidimensional perspective that goes beyond threats to international peace and security to include the economic and social aspects of the process. Lessons learned highlight the urgent need to bridge gaps in the transition between the peacekeeping and peacebuilding stages by ensuring that international support is provided when peacekeeping mandates expire so as to reinforce national reconciliation efforts and sustain reconstruction strategies and plans, thereby preventing States from relapsing into conflict.

The main purpose of the adoption by the Security Council and the General Assembly of parallel resolutions establishing the Peacebuilding Commission was to ensure the international community's continued engagement in the resolution of conflict situations — through the involvement of the Security Council, when such situations constitute threats to international peace and security, and of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council and their relevant subsidiary bodies. This would enable them to deal effectively and in an integrated manner with the post-conflict phase — with its economic, social and humanitarian aspects that are directly linked to the requirements for development and peacebuilding in those States — with the support of the international financial institutions, donor countries and other active parties.

Despite the relative progress achieved by the Peacebuilding Commission on the cases of Burundi and Sierra Leone, several organizational aspects still need to be resolved, especially given the lack of precedents. The past six months have exposed differences among members of the Commission on certain issues, but they have also shown that there are certain common views that need to be crystallized. They have also highlighted the urgent need to ensure balance in the relationship between the Commission and the principal organs, each of which has its own prerogatives as set out in the Charter. There is thus a need to continue the serious dialogue that recently began within the Organizational Committee with a view to establishing a clear programme of work that provides a firm foundation for the Commission's activities.

The General Assembly is the organ charged with responsibility for dealing with such issues — not only because universal representation makes it the main and most democratic organ within the United Nations but also because it is responsible for following up on and assessing the role of the Peacebuilding Commission and for providing and reviewing policy guidance in accordance with the resolutions establishing the Commission. Thus, the General Assembly must have more scope to request advice from the Peacebuilding

Commission. It must be able to do so even when a situation is on the agenda of the Security Council, on the basis of other, related, agenda items already under consideration in the General Assembly.

That does not, however, mean that there will be no need to improve the rules of procedure, as might be required over time as the Commission carries out its activities. We must take a gradual and flexible approach to improving the rules of procedure; too many details would slow down the functioning of the Commission. The rules of procedure of the General Assembly must apply in cases where the rules of procedure of the Peacebuilding Commission fall short.

We must pay due attention to the concepts of transparency and accountability within the Commission, based on the responsibility of all of its members, without discrimination between donor and non-donor countries, to achieve the objectives that they were elected or appointed to realize. We must also make sure that the Peacebuilding Support Office is accountable only to the Commission and not to any other organ.

We must promote the role of the Organizational Committee in following up and assessing objectively the policies and activities carried out within the framework of the country-specific configurations. Hence, it is important to arrange field visits, coordinated with various national activities and with the consent of the States concerned, in order to determine the size of the country financial envelopes required. We must also make sure that, following their determination by the Commission, those envelopes are speedily delivered to support approved national plans, in order to strengthen efforts to re-establish peace and stability.

In order to ensure that the necessary financial resources are readily available, the Organizational Committee must review the terms of reference for the Peacebuilding Fund and provide general policy guidance. This is particularly important with respect to the Secretary-General's nomination of the members of the independent advisory group responsible for providing advice and oversight regarding the appropriateness of Fund allocations and examining its administrative and financial performance. They should then be appointed by the Organizational Committee on the basis of equitable geographical distribution.

Finally, we must ensure that the advisory role of the Commission and the Peacebuilding Support Office in assisting national Governments to formulate their peacebuilding strategies does not lead to a new form of trusteeship. Furthermore, the Commission, in deciding on contributions to be disbursed through the Peacebuilding Fund to give an initial boost to urgent projects, should not be transformed into a mere broker, bringing together donor and recipient countries under the supervision of the Secretary-General. Moreover, while we support the participation of civil society in States emerging from conflict, we must ensure that the intergovernmental nature of the Commission is not overlooked. Civil society organizations and the private sector must be able to express their views in a manner consistent with agreed rules on the inclusion of such organizations in United Nations activities.

Those are some of the important substantive and procedural issues that have arisen over the past six months and that must be tackled. Egypt hopes that we will be able to benefit from the experiences with Burundi and Sierra Leone, the first two cases before the Commission. We hope that every effort will be made to reinforce the foundations of peace in those two States so that their expectations of the Peacebuilding Commission can be met and in order to help their peoples to fulfil their aspirations for development and prosperity. We also hope that this will enable us to better deal with other cases in the future. Yesterday's informal joint meeting on Burundi and Sierra Leone was an important step in the right direction, both substantively and procedurally, and we hope that it will facilitate the Peacebuilding Commission's achievement of its objectives.

Mr. Maqungo (South Africa): I would like to begin by associating myself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Jamaica on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

When the 2005 World Summit called for the creation of the Peacebuilding Commission, it was in the realization that countries emerging from conflict did not have a forum within the United Nations system dedicated to their plight. For example, a country caught up in conflict could count on the Security Council to assist it with peacekeeping, and a country that had long since emerged from conflict could rely on the Economic and Social Council or even the General Assembly to help attract development projects. But for a country that had just emerged from bitter conflict, the

chance of falling between the cracks was very real before the Peacebuilding Commission was created.

It is for that reason that, in accordance with the resolutions establishing it, the Peacebuilding Commission is expected to have a direct impact on the lives of people in the countries on its agenda. Country ownership of Peacebuilding Commission strategies is a necessary ingredient for long-term success.

Therefore, the Peacebuilding Commission should have firsthand knowledge about the role-players on the ground that are promoting post-conflict recovery in a country emerging from conflict, since the Commission is best placed to enhance coordination and cooperation among the various stakeholders.

It is expected that in June 2007, or shortly thereafter, the General Assembly will review the work of the Peacebuilding Commission, as mandated by resolution 60/180. It would be helpful at that time if the Commission were to present a report that also contained the lessons learned from Burundi and Sierra Leone, the first two countries on the Commission's agenda.

One of the Commission's strengths is that it can organize emergency resources, which are often the glue that keeps countries from sliding back into conflict. But the fact that the Peacebuilding Commission can raise seed money does not make it a donor agency.

According to operative paragraph 2 of resolution 60/180, which created the Commission, its primary role is:

> "(a) To bring together all relevant actors to marshal resources and to advise on and propose integrated strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery;
>
> "(b) To focus attention on the reconstruction and institution-building efforts necessary for recovery from conflict and to support the development of integrated strategies in order to lay the foundation for sustainable development;
>
> "(c) to provide recommendations and information to improve the coordination of all relevant actors within and outside the United Nations, to develop best practices, to help to ensure predictable financing for early recovery activities and to extend the period of attention given by the international community to post-conflict recovery".

In conclusion, my delegation believes that there are some operational goals that the Peacebuilding Commission should set for itself if it is to become effective. Among those is ensuring that countries emerging from conflict have full ownership of the peacebuilding process for the benefit of their people. Another is to make certain that the Commission develops rules of procedure that are permanent and predictable. It should be clear to everyone what the Commission is about and what it can and cannot do.

The Peacebuilding Commission is extremely important to the lives of peoples in countries that are emerging from conflict. We agree with the Non-Aligned Movement that the Commission should consider, as a matter of urgency, undertaking field missions to Freetown and Bujumbura in order to evaluate the situation on the ground and to exchange information with Government authorities, civil society and other key stakeholders. We also concur that field missions should be an integral tool of the Peacebuilding Commission. Otherwise, the New York meetings are not going to make a great difference in the lives of people in Freetown or Bujumbura, who are supposed to be the direct beneficiaries of the work of the Peacebuilding Commission.

Mr. Soler Torrijos (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): Madam President, allow me at the outset to congratulate you for having responded to the suggestion of the Non-Aligned Movement to convene this important meeting in order to engage in a preliminary analysis of the work done so far by the Peacebuilding Commission. Likewise, we endorse the statement made earlier by the delegation of Jamaica on behalf of the Movement.

We feel certain that this meeting, like the one held a few days ago in the Security Council, will serve to strengthen and provide guidance to the Commission in the important work entrusted to it by the heads of State or Government when they established the Commission at the 2005 Summit.

With regard to the topic under consideration, Panama today is in a very particular situation. That is because Panama is currently a non-permanent member of the Security Council and has been designated by the latter as a member of the Peacebuilding Commission. But, above all, Panama is also a member of the General

Assembly and a founding Member of the United Nations. This situation enables us to analyse with particular objectivity the complex structure of the Peacebuilding Commission and its links to the other organs of the United Nations.

The Peacebuilding Commission was established by the heads of State or Government at the 2005 Summit in order to assist countries that are emerging, or about to emerge, from conflict situations in order to put an end to hostilities and then to embark on the road to recovery. However, putting an end to hostilities and launching a process of recovery both require time. In other words, these are processes, not events.

In any case, in order for the Organization to assist a given country to emerge from conflict and to achieve lasting peace, joint and coordinated efforts will be required on the part of the Peacebuilding Commission on the one hand and the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council on the other. This is clear from the mandate created at the 2005 Summit and from the General Assembly and Security Council resolutions aimed at its implementation.

With regard to the structure and functioning of the Peacebuilding Commission, we believe that there are a few concepts that must be better defined. That task is primarily the responsibility of the Commission's Organizational Committee, but the General Assembly can also make a useful contribution.

I wish to refer in particular to the mandate of the Commission and to the principle that the peacebuilding process is the responsibility of the country concerned, something that has become known as country ownership.

With respect to the mandate of the Commission, resolution 60/180 states that the Commission must operate as an intergovernmental advisory body. However, in Panama's view, for the Commission fully to discharge the mission entrusted to it by the General Assembly, it will have to carry out functions that go beyond a purely advisory role.

For that reason, in our view, the mandate of the Commission should be viewed flexibly, so as to avoid needless bureaucracy and disagreements that would only detract from our principal task: achieving lasting peace in countries emerging from conflict situations.

With regard to country ownership, the situation is somewhat more complex, since there are risks involved in its implementation that we need to be aware of, address and overcome.

In any case, the delegation of Panama believes that country ownership does not necessarily mean that the country whose situation is being considered by the Peacebuilding Commission can itself adopt and implement the policies, programmes and institutions that it may see as most appropriate to its recovery. For us, country ownership means that the country whose situation — including its political, social and economic forces — is being considered by the Commission will have to agree with the Commission and adopt as its own a plan for the establishment and implementation of policies, programmes and institutions required in order to embark on the road to recovery, reconstruction and development.

The Peacebuilding Commission is not just a step in the right direction towards fulfilling the purposes of the Charter. It can also serve as a catalyst to ensure that the various principal organs of the United Nations act in a joint and coherent manner, as parts of a whole, as was envisaged by its founding Members.

Mr. Sen (India): Let me begin by expressing my delegation's appreciation to you, Madam President, for scheduling this discussion on an important subject at such short notice. We also thank you, as well as the President of the Security Council, the Chairman of the Peacebuilding Commission, the Chairs of its country-specific configurations and the Chair of its Working Group on Lessons Learned, for the important statements made and for the very important work that they have undertaken. We also wish to thank you, Madam President, for your decision to write to potential donors to seek further contributions to the Peacebuilding Fund in order to ensure that the funding target is met. As a contributor to the Fund, we welcome your support for it.

I should also like to express our appreciation to the delegation of Jamaica, coordinator of the Non-Aligned Movement caucus within the Peacebuilding Commission, for its diligence and for its statement today, with which we align ourselves.

While the statement made by our colleague and friend from Jamaica eloquently encapsulates the collective position of the Non-Aligned Movement on this issue, I would like to very briefly explore a few

ideas and to make a few suggestions in our national capacity with a view to encouraging some introspection.

To start with, it has been of concern to us that, since the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission last year, we have spent a considerable amount of time on housekeeping issues. Initially, when we were collectively engaged in defining what this body would do and how it would go about achieving its goals, that may have been a valid exercise. However, at this stage, I submit that we cannot continue indefinitely discussing preliminary issues such as reporting responsibilities, participation and operational matters to the detriment of the larger goal of assisting in the consolidation of peace in post-conflict societies. To do so would be to miss the wood for the trees.

Secondly, in terms of procedure and priority, we accept the premise that the country-specific meetings are a crucial element in ensuring that assistance and advice are speedily and effectively administered to candidate countries. However, it is difficult to accept that this process mechanism takes precedence over the Organizational Committee, which is the steering mechanism of the Peacebuilding Commission. But we recognize that there are alternative views on that subject. Therefore, perhaps we should not ask ourselves which takes precedence. Instead, let us ask ourselves a more practical question: how the work of the Organizational Committee and the country-specific configurations can be harmonized and made more complementary.

In a similar vein, we believe that the success of the Commission is critically dependent on a harmonious and effective Organizational Committee. To reiterate the metaphor of steering, if 31 pilots argue over a ship's steering wheel, the ship will only run aground. It is therefore our view that we need to change the nature of the discourse within the Organizational Committee. To some extent, that can be addressed if there is a larger sense of overarching purpose in its meetings. But, above and beyond that, we need to find ways to increase mutual trust — to begin with, by creating a more collegial and consultative approach. The Peacebuilding Support Office, the United Nations Secretariat and, indeed, each of the member States on the Organizational Committee share a responsibility to do so.

We do not believe that such a broad understanding will be difficult to reach. The statements made last week by a number of partners in the peacebuilding process reflect a belief in the existence of common ground. In our view, that common ground lies in recognizing that the goal is to assist candidate countries with funding, to mobilize donor support and to design policies that will consolidate peace. The painful history of the post-world-war years illustrates the fragility of peace in post-conflict societies. Here, Nietzsche has sometimes been proved right: peace is an interregnum between two periods of war. Therefore, all of us also emphasize the need for expeditious action.

Consequently, we hold that it is self-evident that the Peacebuilding Commission is not merely about donors of money and recipients, but also about the provision of advice and policy support, both through learning by example and through assistance in designing policies based on the specificities of the society concerned. On the one hand, to really contribute fundamentally and to be truly relevant, the Peacebuilding Commission will have to examine in depth and provide advice on today's most urgent problems, such as how to promote some understanding among a country's regional and ethnic leaders and assess the pace of, say, economic reform or elections, which, if embarked on too early or at the wrong time, may actually retard institution-building and plunge a country back into civil war. On the other hand, one size clearly does not fit all, and what works in a small and more homogeneous country may not work in a large and fractured State. Above all, it is important to focus on whether resources are going to the most important task: institution-building.

We also believe that there is no gainsaying the fact that the lead actor in any post-conflict peacebuilding situation must be the nation concerned. While we welcome inputs from all sections of society, both nationally and internationally, the primary focus cannot but be to strengthen the capacity of a post-conflict State to govern effectively and to mobilize human and material resources to achieve development. Every other perspective that is provided is useful, but we should also recognize that a non-national perspective can only be segmental. Useful though they may be, such perspectives can reflect only part of the picture. The appropriate image, therefore, is a circle whose circumference may run through and encompass many countries, but whose centre is in one country.

That brings me to my final point. We believe that we need to renew our focus and our commitment to the larger cause of assisting the candidate countries that are before us. We need to listen more closely to their concerns and to react with greater dispatch to their requests. If we do so in a manner that most directly addresses their concerns, we will not only be able to assist the States concerned in the process of post-conflict peace consolidation, but will also have demonstrated the efficacy of the new mechanism that is the Peacebuilding Commission. That will have beneficial effects ranging from a more results-oriented discourse within the Commission to greater donor willingness not only to assist the candidate countries themselves, but also to fund the Commission.

To summarize: it is our view that the teething troubles of which we are wont to speak can be addressed once we have placed before ourselves the larger picture and the overarching goal. Once we have done so, the debates over what are, in the final analysis, only minutiae will recede into the background. It is only then that the Peacebuilding Commission will come into its own. It is our hope that, with the rapid acceleration of the Commission's work in the coming months, all of us will be able to return to the Assembly on the first anniversary of the establishment of the Commission with a more optimistic report card and in a more forward-looking frame of mind.

Ms. Barbosa (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mexico thanks you, Madam President, for convening this meeting to discuss the progress made thus far by one of the two youngest organs of the United Nations system. Our deliberations are taking place at a very opportune time as the process of defining the Peacebuilding Commission continues. We are certain that the profit we gain from this exercise, together with the set of proposals put forward in the Security Council last week, will contribute to that process. Let us take advantage of this opportunity to reflect on the future of the Commission.

My delegation expresses its thanks for the work being done by Ambassador Ismael Gaspar Martins, Permanent Representative of Angola, as Chairman of the Organizational Committee. We also congratulate Assistant Secretary-General Carolyn McAskie of the Peacebuilding Support Office on the efforts that she has made in an unprecedented endeavour.

The delegation of Mexico wishes to make five observations regarding the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission and its performance over the less than one year of its existence.

First, my Government believes that the Commission has been established as a test of multilateralism, and specifically of the United Nations. Together with the Human Rights Council, it is one of the most tangible outcomes of the 2005 World Summit and of the Organization's reform process. The expectations within and outside this House are therefore immense. The eyes and the confidence of the international community are focused on what the Commission might produce. We believe that if it yields positive results in an area as neglected as post-conflict peacebuilding, the multilateral system will not only have prevailed, but will also have gained greater political capital with which to make progress on the remaining items on the reform agenda. The combined political will that made it possible to adopt General Assembly resolution 60/180 and Security Council resolution 1645 (2005) must not be lost. The Commission is thus facing no less a challenge.

But there is a second challenge of vital importance. It is known to all that the contribution of the United Nations to reducing civil conflicts has been very significant. Nevertheless, and despite its best intentions, the Organization has failed to prevent recurrence of conflicts and to establish political and functional institutions in societies devastated by internal wars. The efforts of the Peacebuilding Commission should be centred on filling this institutional vacuum and repairing the historical record.

Secondly, the debate that took place last week in the Security Council reiterated that the Commission's mandate is vague. As pointed out by the Permanent Representative of South Africa, it would appear that the Commission "means different things to different people". Several delegations presented a plethora of contributions regarding what the Commission should or should not do. That set of proposals needs to be studied by the Organizational Committee, but mainly by this General Assembly — the universal forum to which the Peacebuilding Commission will periodically render account.

My delegation joined in the consensus on resolution 60/180 because, inter alia, we believed that

in relation to the other principal organs of the United Nations, the Peacebuilding Commission would operate on the basis of the principle of complementarity with regard to the responsibilities that each of those organs has. We firmly believe that the Commission has an authority that is clearly set out and that should not be encroached upon either by the Security Council or by any other organ. Likewise, we are aware of the need to ensure that work in the Commission proceeds with attention to coherence in the system in order to avoid duplication and to optimize the resources available to us.

Thirdly, Mexico is convinced that the decisions and the direction the Commission takes should be guided by three principal purposes. On the one hand, we believe that any advice with regard to national cases should be provided on the basis of an integrated approach to post-conflict peacebuilding. Defining the phases through which a country goes when it emerges from war is increasingly complex. Some cases have shown that efforts at disarmament, demobilization and reintegration need to be carried out in tandem with tasks linked to construction of institutions or the promotion of programmes to foster a culture of human rights. The threats that give rise to recurrence of conflict can remain hidden in various ways — socially, politically or in terms of development. The concept of peacebuilding is one of the few in which the link between security, development, the rule of law and human rights is entirely clear and increasingly relevant.

Mexico believes that the Commission will be able to work hand in hand with the Rule of Law Coordination and Resource Group established by the Secretary-General, on the basis of the report presented to us in December 2006 (A/61/636).

On the other hand, we feel it advisable to recall that there is not a single model for peacebuilding. Each national case is unique; each history is a war with its own causes. It is possible to draw parallels based on past experience. In that regard, Mexico welcomes the decision to form a working group on lessons learned. We believe such lessons should be compiled and disseminated appropriately. Nevertheless, it will be fundamental that each national case be treated with the specific focus it deserves, and in situations in which a national authority exists it should be empowered throughout all phases of the design and implementation of the peacebuilding strategy. It will be difficult for a sense of nationhood to emerge in a country where decisions are being artificially imposed.

Mexico believes that without clarity of purposes and priorities, it will not be possible to qualify the work of the Peacebuilding Commission as a success or a failure. One of the goals of the Commission is to serve as a bridge between the United Nations system, the international financial institutions, donors, civil society and regional actors. Nevertheless, in my delegation's view, that goal will not be reached effectively if the Commission fails in to promote a common vision among all the actors as to the way in which peace needs to be consolidated.

Fourthly, we welcome the announcement on 29 October by then Secretary-General Kofi Annan of the contribution of $35 million to the Peacebuilding Fund. Mexico considers that the Commission and the Fund are in a symbiotic relationship. We are aware that sustainable commitment is required of all donors to guarantee resources that will be available when they are needed. Without mobilization and availability of adequate resources from the Fund, the Commission will not be able to fulfil its mandate with the efficiency that we all — especially civilians in the field — expect.

Fifthly, to use an English term that explains the present status of the Commission, my delegation believes that we have before us now a "work in progress". There are more that a handful of highly complex matters yet to be defined, but there seems to be a consensus on several procedural matters that could be amended as of now, in the initial months in the life of the Commission, so that something that emerges unintentionally does not become the rule rather than the exception.

For example, Mexico reiterates the need for the Commission to function on the basis of well-defined rules of procedure. Let us avoid what happened with the rules of procedure of the Security Council — something originally conceived of as provisional has continued to exist for 61 years. The legitimacy and credibility of the Peacebuilding Commission will in large measure depend on whether we build a new organ that operates with the greatest possible transparency. We propose that the meetings of the Organizational Committee be conducted openly and publicly to ensure that States not members at a given moment but that do

participate in its creation in the Assembly will be aware of its progress at first hand.

In addition, my delegation again urges other Member States to focus their energies on ensuring greater and better monitoring of the principle of equitable geographical distribution, especially with regard to the membership of future committees of the Organization.

We are optimistic about the contribution that the Peacebuilding Commission can make. It is time to maintain a proactive and innovative attitude when facing post-conflict situations under the Commission's consideration. The institutional vacuum that motivated the creation of the Commission will be filled only if Member States endow it with the tools and resources necessary to fulfil its mandate. Let us not fail to take advantage of the opportunity presented by the creation of the Peacebuilding Commission, an opportunity again being given to the multilateral system. We are in time to do this.

Mr. Oshima (Japan): My delegation wishes to thank you, Madam President, for your timely initiative in convening this important meeting. The Peacebuilding Commission is a major achievement of the ongoing reform of the United Nations, and as such, expectations of it are high. We Member States collectively shoulder the responsibility for ensuring that the Commission achieves its full potential. This meeting, together with last week's open debate in the Security Council, is an excellent opportunity for us to take stock of the progress that has been made and to set the course for the next stage.

The Peacebuilding Commission was established as an intergovernmental advisory body to fill the gap in the area of peacebuilding in the United Nations system. It should therefore address issues that encompass the mandates of the principal organs as well as the other various entities within that system. To make the Commission a success, it is essential that all of these components work together harmoniously. To this end, we must improve dialogue and coordination both in New York and on the ground. My delegation has advocated this point and made several suggestions.

The Peacebuilding Commission has made steady progress thus far. It has successfully identified priority areas for the countries in question and has put consultation mechanisms into operation. We too welcome the recent announcement by the Secretary-General on the first allocation under the Peacebuilding Fund of $35 million for Burundi, and we hope a similar announcement for Sierra Leone will be made shortly. These initial outlays will surely serve as a catalyst for filling critical local needs that would not otherwise be met, as well as for marshalling additional resources.

The Peacebuilding Commission was established to help prevent relapse into conflict by making a difference on the ground. The Commission is now entering a critical phase, in which it must demonstrate tangible achievements in the two countries under consideration. The Commission's strength lies in its action-oriented recommendations. In the light of that, my delegation believes that the Commission must focus on creating an integrated peacebuilding strategy for each country through extensive consultations in the country-specific meetings over the coming months. The Commission also needs to specify more focused target areas within the priorities identified in order to ensure that those strategies are action-oriented in that regard.

We believe that institution-building and human security are two important dimensions of peacebuilding. Those two elements should be fully taken into account in formulating focused target areas. Here are some suggestions for enhancing the creation and implementation of the strategy.

First of all, strong national ownership is essential. A peacebuilding strategy can be valuable only if the country in question demonstrates the will to formulate and implement it. We are pleased to see the active and constructive involvement of Burundi and Sierra Leone, and we commend their swift responses to the Commission's recommendations. We look forward to their continued commitment to peace and reconstruction.

Secondly, a peacebuilding strategy should represent all relevant stakeholders. Peacebuilding is by nature a multifaceted and multilayered undertaking involving all stakeholders, working together in areas such as peace and security, development and human rights. In the light of that, my delegation remains committed to ensuring full and active participation by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in all meetings, including those of the Organizational Committee. It is also important to establish a modality for securing effective participation by civil society and non-governmental organizations in the work of the

Commission, in particular the country-specific meetings, at which they can make valuable contributions.

In that regard, the establishment of an on-the-ground coordination and monitoring mechanism would contribute significantly to the implementation of the strategy. As I stated in the Security Council debate (see S/PV.5627), the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board in Afghanistan, which involves all relevant stakeholders, could serve as a successful model. We should consider tailoring that model to the specific needs of each country in question as appropriate.

Thirdly, we should be flexible enough to learn from the experiences of countries that have recovered from conflict. We strongly encourage such countries to share their experiences in the next stage of our consultations. In view of that, we appreciate El Salvador's initiative in establishing a Working Group to take stock of lessons learned in that country. My delegation will participate actively in the Group.

Before concluding, I shall now turn briefly to some organizational matters both inside and outside the Peacebuilding Commission. Enhancing the synergy and interaction between the General Assembly and the Commission is critical. We suggest that the President of the General Assembly and the Chair of the Commission have regular meetings to discuss pressing issues. In addition, the Chair of the Commission and/or the Chairs of the country-specific meetings should make timely written reports to the General Assembly on the deliberations, as appropriate.

The founding resolution gives to the General Assembly the task of reviewing the work of the Peacebuilding Commission. The Assembly will accomplish that through a yearly debate on the Commission's annual report. The Assembly's role is important in both substantive and organizational terms, particularly during the "teething stage" of the Commission. We look forward to a critical and constructive review and hope that the General Assembly makes useful recommendations to the Commission as appropriate.

We are very much encouraged by recent efforts to institutionalize the Peacebuilding Commission. In particular, we appreciate the long-awaited proposal of work plans for the country-specific meetings. The work plans clearly provide much-needed predictability to our work. My delegation fully supports the basic framework of the work plans. The recent staff additions to the Peacebuilding Support Office will enable it to provide the support necessary to make them operational.

In conclusion, I would like to express our appreciation to Ambassador Ismael Gaspar Martins of Angola, Chairman of the Peacebuilding Commission, and to Ambassador Johan Løvald of Norway and Ambassador Frank Majoor of the Netherlands, Chairmen of the country-specific meetings on Burundi and Sierra Leone, respectively, for their valuable contributions. I wish to reaffirm Japan's firm commitment to contributing to the Commission, particularly at this critical juncture. I am also very pleased to announce that Japan will hold a seminar on peacebuilding in Timor-Leste in Tokyo this March. I hope that the Commission and the General Assembly will further advance the deliberations on the issues that we have discussed today.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): Pakistan expresses its gratitude to you, Madam President, for having convened this debate on the activities of the Peacebuilding Commission at such short notice. We also welcome the opportunity to participate in it.

Pakistan supports the statement made earlier by the Permanent Representative of Jamaica on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission at the 2005 World Summit was a landmark achievement in the United Nations reform process. The Commission is structurally capable of promoting a comprehensive and coherent system-wide approach to the complex task of peacebuilding. By design, the new body was meant to be innovative and flexible.

The Commission is still in its formative phase and is evolving and developing. It would, of course, be incorrect to assert that the Commission has accomplished very little. We have done a great deal and continue to achieve further progress while we learn in parallel. The Commission needs to clarify and chart the trajectory of its future work in the coming months.

In that context, the Commission faces two categories of issues: first, problems relating to organization and process; and secondly, problems relating to its substantive work.

In the first category, three major issues need to be resolved in the near future. The first is the lack of clarity regarding the relationship of the Peacebuilding Commission with the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly. Paragraph 15 of resolution 60/180 provides some clarity on the relationship between the Commission and the Assembly through its decision that the Commission shall submit an annual report to the General Assembly, which shall hold an annual debate to review the report.

However, such clarity is largely absent as regards the Commission's relationship with the Economic and Social Council. There are some vast areas in which the Commission needs to interact with the Economic and Social Council — for instance, debt relief, capacity-building, governance, the strengthening of democracy, economic recovery, budgetary support and youth unemployment. All of those issues are within the purview of the Economic and Social Council. The Commission should therefore devise an institutional mechanism to utilize the Economic and Social Council's Charter role and responsibilities.

The relationship between the Peacebuilding Commission and the Security Council is, of course, clearer. Two situations — those in Burundi and Sierra Leone — have been put on the agenda of the Commission in response to the Council's request for advice. However, the relationship between the Commission and the Council should be interactive.

It would be useful to evoke responses from the Security Council to some general questions. How, for example, is the advice given by the Peacebuilding Commission being utilized? How could it be best utilized by the Council? Have the Peacebuilding Commission's deliberations influenced the Council's decisions on the two issues on the Commission's agenda? How could the Council's interaction with the Commission be improved? Is the interface of the seven Council members in the Commission sufficient, or is there a need for wider consultations between the Peacebuilding Commission and the Security Council? Another organizational issue relates to modalities for the participation of civil society groups and non-governmental organizations. These should be flexibly resolved, bearing in mind the Commission's essentially intergovernmental character.

Thirdly, there have been efforts to downplay the position and role of the Organizational Committee. That is most unfortunate. While there is a general understanding that most of the Peacebuilding Commission's work will be done in country-specific formats, it is evident that there are issues — especially general or systemic issues — which can be discussed only in the Organizational Committee. The Committee should also have an oversight role in the work of the country-specific groups. Furthermore, the interaction of the Peacebuilding Commission with the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly, as well as with other institutional actors, should be coordinated and conducted by the Organizational Committee, which needs to meet more frequently and regularly.

On the substantive aspects of the Commission's work, it is still in the process of learning by doing. Despite difficulties and constraints, the Peacebuilding Commission, which held its first country-specific meetings only three months ago, has embarked on some serious work. The preparations for and the quality and scope of discussions in the country-specific meetings have progressively improved. Key priorities have been identified and work plans are now being prepared, with corresponding timelines for actions to be undertaken by various actors on those activities.

With a view to further improving the substantive work of the Commission, Pakistan would like to make a number of proposals.

First, there should be better planning of and preparation for the country-specific meetings.

Second, in our view, since we have United Nations integrated offices in both countries to support peace consolidation, the reports of the Secretary-General on the activities of those offices should be substantially discussed in the Peacebuilding Commission. The Peacebuilding Commission should not become merely another donor-recipient forum; the contributions of other members — for example, troop-contributing countries, as well as those with experience of post-conflict reconstruction — ought to be welcomed and reflected in the Commission's conclusions.

Third, there should be greater emphasis on the elaboration and implementation of integrated national plans by the authorities of the country concerned.

Fourth, there is also a need to harmonize the Commission's work in identifying the key peacebuilding priorities for the countries on its agenda, with the broader objective of pursuing integrated peacebuilding strategies in respect of those countries.

Fifth, there is a need for clearer identification of the gaps in the implementation of integrated national plans and relevant actors that can help to bridge such gaps.

Sixth, there are other pressing issues, such as security sector reform, economic reform, rebuilding damaged or destroyed infrastructure and human resources investment, which all require funding and technical support, technology transfer and expert advice. These are substantive areas in which the Peacebuilding Commission could make important contributions by defining the problem areas and identifying the actors and modalities to respond to them.

Seventh, the sharing of information should be improved substantially, especially with the countries on the Peacebuilding Commission's agenda, Commission members and stakeholders.

Finally, one of the key areas of attention for the Commission should be the mobilization of resources. The Peacebuilding Fund is a good option to meet immediate and pressing requirements. The timely replenishment of the Fund should be ensured. However, it is also essential to ensure that the Peacebuilding Commission is able to marshal and sustain adequate resources for implementing agreed objectives, plans and programmes in the concerned countries. All possible mechanisms should be deployed for that purpose, including donor conferences.

We must all be clear about the rationale for the creation and existence of the Peacebuilding Commission. It is, first, its capacity to adopt a comprehensive approach to all issues of peacebuilding. Secondly, it is the capacity to promote complementarity and synergetic actions at three levels — between the national Government or authority and the international community; between the United Nations system and all other actors involved, including the Bretton Woods institutions; and among the three principal organs of the United Nations: the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly.

Mr. Idoko (Nigeria): Six months is traditionally considered to be a long time in the life of any organization or administration. The Nigerian delegation therefore welcomes this debate, which — like the one held in the Security Council on 31 January — provides the opportunity for Member States to take stock and exchange views on the progress made by the Peacebuilding Commission since its establishment by the General Assembly.

Nigeria aligns itself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Jamaica, His Excellency Ambassador Raymond Wolfe, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. I should also like to take this opportunity to reaffirm Nigeria's confidence in the Chairman of the Peacebuilding Commission, Ambassador Ismael Gaspar Martins of Angola, and the other members of the Bureau of the Organizational Committee. In addition, I wish to pay tribute to Norway and the Netherlands — Chairs of the country-specific meetings on Burundi and Sierra Leone, respectively — for their commitment. In the same vein, we commend the Peacebuilding Support Office for its dedication and hard work.

Nigeria is well aware of the teething problems centring on procedural issues which had tended to slow down the work of the Commission. I am delighted to note, however, that the Commission has largely overcome those initial hiccups and that it is now poised to deliver on the objectives envisaged by our leaders in September 2005. The Organizational Committee has had a number of fruitful meetings. It successfully organized two country-specific meetings on Burundi and two on Sierra Leone, which proved very rewarding in terms of bringing together important actors associated with peacebuilding efforts in the two countries. In addition, the two meetings were able to identify and agree on the priority needs of the two countries. The Governments of the two countries have since assumed ownership of the identified priority needs. Furthermore, as a result of those meetings, funds have already been approved for Burundi. We are optimistic that very soon the funds for Sierra Leone will be announced.

Fears have been expressed that the dual parentage that the Peacebuilding Commission enjoys in the General Assembly and the Security Council could become a liability rather than an asset because of possible conflict or competition between the two organs. On the contrary, Nigeria believes that the

combined support of the General Assembly and the Security Council is necessary for the strengthening of the Peacebuilding Commission and that it should be exploited for the overall benefit of the Commission.

For millions of people in countries emerging from conflict, the Peacebuilding Commission represents a beacon of hope and a source of succour in their lives. In this regard, Burundi and Sierra Leone will be seen as a test case for the success or failure of the Commission. Many countries that need the assistance of the Peacebuilding Commission are eagerly waiting to be considered. It is therefore imperative that we give the Commission maximum support and assistance so that it can deliver on its mandate.

As the Commission enters the crucial stage of its first year, we would like to draw attention to some aspects of its work which Nigeria believes are capable of consolidating the gains and experience of the past months. Bearing in mind the fact that country-specific meetings are the best forum for bringing the Commission closer to the beneficiaries of the work of the Commission, we would encourage the Commission to interact more with the relevant actors on the ground. We would also like the Organizational Committee to meet more regularly to ensure that the decisions taken are promptly pursued. In the same vein, it would be highly beneficial for the Peacebuilding Commission to devote more time to resource mobilization. Furthermore, we believe that members of the Commission should undertake visits to countries under consideration in order to reassure the affected countries of the commitment of the international community. Finally, the Commission should be results-oriented, especially given that its success will be measured in terms of the difference it makes to the lives of peoples in countries emerging from conflict.

Mr. Hoang Chi Trung (Viet Nam): It is my great pleasure to speak on behalf of the Vietnamese delegation in this debate on the progress achieved in the work of the Peacebuilding Commission. My delegation sees this plenary meeting as a good opportunity to review the recent work done by the Commission and to set out future guidelines.

We wish to align ourselves with the statement made earlier by the representative of Jamaica on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The world community has been grappling with a number of unresolved problems in its arduous quest for durable peace, stability and development. Despite the tireless efforts made by the United Nations to achieve its noble goals as enshrined in the Charter, conflicts have continued to escalate in various regions in the world, with devastating consequences for millions of innocent civilians. As a result, peacekeeping and post-conflict peacebuilding operations are becoming increasingly massive and complex, placing unprecedented burdens on the United Nations given the Organization's strained resources.

Against that backdrop, the 2005 World Summit gave rise to hope that more efficient ways would be found to sustainably assist conflict-stricken States in achieving lasting peace and development and preventing them from relapsing into deadly strife. In that regard, the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission and its Support Office and Fund not only reinvigorates United Nations reform but also creates instruments that are more unified in order to oversee and carry out peacebuilding activities worldwide.

The Vietnamese delegation wishes to commend the recent efforts undertaken by the Peacebuilding Commission in the light of General Assembly and Security Council resolutions 60/180 and 1645 (2005), respectively. We note with satisfaction that Sierra Leone and Burundi, the first countries supported by the Commission, have made remarkable progress in their national reconstruction and rehabilitation, and we hope that more country-specific meetings will be convened, in a timely manner, to help address critical issues in other States in need.

On its first anniversary, the Peacebuilding Commission can look back on interlinked achievements and challenges. My delegation wishes to underline the importance of redefining and revitalizing the purpose and mission of the Commission, as mandated in the relevant resolutions. Unless the Commission is able to develop its own rules of procedure and working methods in a transparent, coherent and results-oriented manner, it will fail to bring added value and to identify a niche for itself.

Moreover, in order for the Commission to live up to the expectations and aspirations of the international community, improvements should be made in the following areas.

First, regular and multidimensional coordination and consultations among various stakeholders engaged in post-conflict peacebuilding are of vital importance. The broad experience of the United Nations in conflict prevention, mediation, peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance, reconstruction and sustainable development must be fully mobilized, in conjunction with resources from international financial institutions, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civil society and the private sector. To that end, the establishment of frameworks for cross-cutting and continuous dialogue among those stakeholders and the Governments concerned is a prerequisite.

Secondly, after the necessary consultations, both at United Nations Headquarters and in the field, international support must be carefully coordinated in a flexible manner and then funnelled into predetermined priority sectors of recipient countries. Such a process would help to avoid wasteful duplication and misuse, but periodic evaluations and adjustments are required so as to produce better outcomes.

Thirdly, national ownership of post-conflict peacebuilding priority plans and initiatives must remain at the forefront of any effort aimed at sustaining peace, initiating development and promoting post-conflict recovery. Foreign assistance can play a supplementary role, but it cannot replace home-grown endeavours aimed at enhancing institutional frameworks, reinforcing capacity-building and strengthening legal and administrative systems, which ultimately bolster autonomy and self-determination.

Despite the fact that some progress has been made so far, the Peacebuilding Commission is still in the process of learning by doing. That is why periodic reviews of its work by the General Assembly will provide greater insight and direction, in terms of both depth and breadth. The Commission's success will, in the end, depend on the timely and effective translation of pledges into disbursements on the ground.

Mr. Romero-Martínez (Honduras) (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of my delegation, allow me to express our appreciation for the convening and preparation of this important meeting. We strongly support the ideas put forward on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement by the Ambassador of Jamaica, Mr. Raymond Wolfe.

When the General Assembly — acting simultaneously with the Security Council in accordance with Articles 7, 22 and 29 of the Charter of the United Nations, and in order to implement the decision taken at the 2005 World Summit — decided to establish the Peacebuilding Commission as an intergovernmental advisory organ, an important step was taken, in our view, towards laying down integrated strategies for peacebuilding, defining the necessary measures for post-conflict recovery, and, above all, preventing, through attitudinal shifts, the spread or prolongation of armed conflict.

Today, at this important meeting, we can review the progress made and consider the possibility of enhancing peacebuilding mechanisms for countries emerging from armed conflict or from situations of social instability.

The proposal made at the 2005 World Summit to create that important Commission represented great progress. Its fundamental task is to avert the recurrence of armed conflict and to lead countries emerging from conflict along the path of sustainable development to a system of justice and equality. Now that its functions are properly defined, we feel that the Commission, by maintaining ongoing contact with the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, is playing an innovative role in our Organization's reform process.

We take this opportunity to offer some general thoughts on peace. My delegation wishes to stress the imperative need for adequate social development for our peoples, which, together with a profound and sincere resolve to eradicate poverty, may give rise to some glimmers of hope and improvement in many of our societies. Inequity, injustice, poverty, lack of education and, in many cases, oppression and the denial of the fundamental rights inherent in the human person constitute a ready source of incitement to the violence and ruthless confrontation among human beings, all belonging to the same species, that traumatizes and horrifies our sense of humanity.

We consider it important to find a definitive solution to ancient border problems that, in certain parts of the world, are critical factors in national, regional and international instability. That scenario is exacerbated by the lack of adequate markets for fairly-priced commodities from developing countries, agricultural subsidies and tariff barriers — unilaterally imposed in certain cases — that do not help to

facilitate urgently-needed recovery for a country that has emerged from national or regional armed conflict.

On 31 January, it was recalled in the Security Council that more than 16 per cent of the world's population — some 1 billion people — are living, or rather subsisting, in extreme poverty and are directly affected by civil wars or at high risk of such in the very near future. Against that backdrop, our conscience recoils and our eyes cannot help but shed a tear as we contemplate a terrible reality that cannot be erased merely by words or statements. We therefore advocate a more just, humane and united international economic system.

My delegation warmly commends the efforts made to date by the Peacebuilding Commission. Its task is not an easy one, nor are the solutions easy to come by. The peace we all yearn for is one of the most deeply desired goals of humankind; it is one of our most ancient dreams and the reality that humanity has sought most assiduously in this world of anxiety and hope. And yet, the word "peace" can at times seem utopian, like the missing link — unreachable and impossible to attain.

We understand peacebuilding to be a mechanism to reverse conditions of social and economic injustice as a cause of conflict and as a guarantee that violence will never be resorted to as a means to resolve such problems. We therefore deem the role of the Commission to be valuable and necessary to our Organization. Thus, my country, Honduras, cannot fail to express its support for the Commission or to commit itself to full cooperation with it. As an original signatory of the United Nations Charter, Honduras has always maintained that cooperation and attitude and complied with the international legal mandates and structures emanating therefrom.

In conclusion, my delegation aspires to peace with dignity, a peace shared by all — the very same peace that was enshrined by the signatories of the Charter in the following words: "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war" and "to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small". In that conviction, we believe that peace will become a reality.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.